



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**AFGHANISTAN**

## FIRST PERSON

# Former Poppy Grower Comes Home

**Alternative Livelihoods  
provides legal economic  
opportunities**

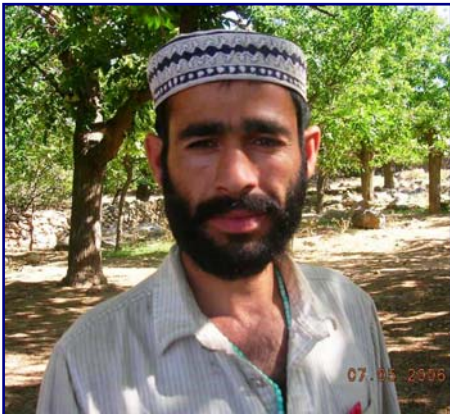


PHOTO: USAID/ALP/E

Mr. Mohammed Noor recently returned from Badakhshan Province where he worked in the poppy fields.

***"I worked here for three months and earned enough money legally that I couldn't earn in other parts of the country through the poppy fields," said Mohammed Noor.***

"I worked on poppy fields in Badakhshan and could hardly earn \$100 a month, including my stay and food. When I got to know that the United States Agency for Development (USAID) Alternative Livelihoods Program cash-for-work project started in our village and with good pay, I decided to come back to the region and work in the cash-for-work project," says Mohammad Noor, a 28-year old supporting an extended family of seventeen members in Zawa, Khogyani District of eastern Afghanistan.

When the Government of Afghanistan imposed restrictions on growing poppy, many farmers left their families in the eastern region to travel to remote parts of the country where they could earn money planting and harvesting illegal poppy.

Itinerant laborers like Mohammad Noor are returning home for opportunities to make legal wages and feed their families after becoming aware of USAID's cash-for-work projects.

"I worked here for three months and earned enough money legally that I couldn't earn in other parts of the country through the poppy fields," said Noor

Agricultural and economic growth programs are beginning to revitalize the local economy. In the meantime, more immediate labor-intensive projects, like flood-wall protection and cobblestone road building—a technique USAID imported from Bolivia—are providing an inducement to men like Noor who want to return to jobs with comparable pay under the cash-for-work program.

From June 1, 2005, to January 31, 2007 the cash-for-work program in Nangarhar, Laghman, and Kunar has employed more than 17,500 individual workers whose efforts have resulted in more than 2,425km of irrigation and drainage canals, 329km of rural roads and over 170,182 hectares of irrigated fields.